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PREPARING WHILE WE WAIT

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With sureness outmeasured only by slowness, our democracy is awaking to the need of military preparedness. A good-natured, lumbering, unprotected giant, composed of a hundred million human parts, is sitting up, rubbing his eyes, and looking around. It is slow work co-ordinating a hundred million brains of graybeards and sucklings into a result-producing organism. Thus far even the graybeards have been so much at variance with one another in their ideas of protection that little save editorial fusillades and oratorical bombardments has arisen to make the country secure from attack.

In considering the matter broadly, it must be honestly admitted that any plan for increasing the army in times of peace, that depends upon voluntary enlistment, with anything like the present inducement for service, is doomed to fail. Military experts affirm this and the evidence of the past confirms it. Diametrically opposed to this is the plan for increasing the army by universal service. But America has developed such democratic hyper-sensitiveness that it is a question if conscription could ever meet with sufficient encouragement, except in war time, to become a popular institution.

Between these extremes manifold plans for building up a national reserve have been conceived, suggested, and relegated into pigeonholes of respectable desuetude. One, however, that has daily been receiving more and more consideration is the introduction of military training into our public schools. Professors with fountain pens for weapons of defense have arrayed arguments against this, ranging from the assertion that "military training destroys initiative," to the statement that "it makes boys hollow-chested." Having been for a number of years intimately connected with the training of boys of high-school age by the military

system, I can list with certainty and brevity the points in favor of the plan.

First, from its national aspect, it places at once almost half a million young men under military training. There are today in the high schools of the United States 441,000 boys between the ages of fourteen and twenty receiving academic instruction. About 71,000 each year are sent out prepared for college or business life. With proportionately small additional cost, they could be also prepared to serve their country in case of war with immediate efficiency instead of with inefficiency.

In the second place, military drill conducted in high schools would have the value of being given to students at the period of life when they not only show most interest in things active and challenging, but absorb most readily all forms of instruction. One has only to note the results achieved by Captain E. Z. Steever, U.S.A., in the state of Wyoming, where 90 per cent of the high-school students voluntarily took military training under his leadership, to appreciate the truth of this statement.

In the third place, military training develops a boy physically. Since the majority of students in the modern high school take athletics from the side lines, physical training tends to become a luxury reserved for the few already strong. Military training means physical training for all. And there is no end to the variety. A boy cannot remain subnormal in physique who takes his turn at wall-scaling, setting-up exercises, Butts manual, digging trenches, and participating in skirmish runs.

Again, the average American boy is in tragic need of a discipline which will teach him regard for constituted authority and courteous recognition of those who are his superiors in vision and efficiency. Proverbial American freedom is too large a clover field for an immature mind. Military training has a superb educational value because it presupposes a discipline that fulfils just this need.

Further, military training inculcates the virtues of promptness, alertness, initiative, and self-reliance. To say that it destroys initiative is not confirmed by the facts. No article of a soldier's equipment is so valuable to him as a "good head." An army

officer of several campaigns said to me not long ago: "The greatest nuisance in the service is the man who won't use his brain as the occasion requires, but who insists on following orders blindly." Success in modern warfare requires pronounced individual initiative of the man in the trench as well as of the scout in the aeroplane. Closely related to initiative are alertness and self-reliance, qualities so long connected with the soldier that they have become venerable through association.

Another point in favor of establishing military training in schools is that it develops moral qualities of responsibility, cooperation, service, and good citizenship. Few forces put an urge into a boy as readily as a sense of responsibility. Under military training he feels it from the start. Why should anyone pronounce it undesirable to inject an idea of responsibility into the soul of the typical high-school boy? In an address made to the cadets of a certain military academy during his first campaign, President Wilson spoke of the uniform as the symbol of service. "We hear of mothers," he said, "hanging the swords and muskets of their sons on the wall so that they may constantly see them. We do not hear of anyone hanging as ornaments of a household any of the symbols of peace, such as a ledger, a yardstick, a pick, or a shovel. The reason for this is that a man supports himself with these implements, but he is doing a service for someone else when he is using the sword or the rifle in battle: and modern people seem to hold a service they do to help themselves below the things they do to help others." Good citizenship is born of responsibility plus service. It therefore is a by-product of military training that is well administered.

A final point that might be listed in favor of introducing military training into public schools is its adaptability to graduation of instruction in high school and college in the same way that academic work is graded from elementary lessons to courses of an advanced and specialized nature. It might readily begin in the Boy Scout companies now so popular with youngsters in the grades. Then if fundamental military tactics were taught in high schools, such for example as squad and company drill in close and extended order, manual of arms, target practice, scouting, signaling, first

aid, wall-scaling, camp-cooking and the like, the colleges could replace their military kindergartens with specialized military training compatible with the academic work of their curricula. This would include artillery drill, map-making, range-finding, target designation, bridge-building, concrete construction, aviation, field maneuvers, and tactical problems of a more complex nature. College students would enter work of this sort with the same zest they manifest in taking up any study in a new and advanced field. A part of the present unpopularity of military drill in colleges is due to its "tin" nature. A university student likes to feel that he is through with elementary and juvenile things. His interest is in doing a man's work.

When it comes to devising ways and means of training high-school students, difficulties naturally arise. But, of course, they are not insurmountable. It took one man just eighteen months to put Wyoming high schools on the military map. Captain Steever began teaching military drill in the Wyoming schools at Cheyenne by developing healthy competition in wall-scaling between squads of boys, extending it later to meets between different schools of the state. A Captain Steever in each state would solve the problem without bothering anybody else, but as yet there are few leaders of just his type.

Recently, however, the War Department has given Captain Steever the opportunity of establishing his system in city high schools of the Middle West which desire to introduce military training. The Chicago schools are to be the chief field of operation, with the Culver Military Academy as the headquarters laboratory. Four lieutenants and sixteen noncommissioned officers have been appointed to assist Captain Steever. Various cities and towns in the district will receive details from this staff, and will co-operate in the extension work.

Aside from army officers detailed by the War Department to schools and colleges, the honor military schools of the country could furnish an extensive corps of graduates able to assist in training high-school boys. The honor schools are those designated by the General Staff as furnishing their students the most efficient military training. Those thus chosen from the essentially military

academies of the country in 1916 were: Culver Military Academy, Culver, Indiana; Kemper Military Academy, Boonville, Missouri; Kentucky Military Institute, Lyndon, Kentucky; New Mexico Military Institute, Roswell, New Mexico; New York Military Academy, Cornwall-on-Hudson, New York; Shattuck School, Faribault, Minnesota; St. John's Military Academy, Delafield, Wisconsin; St. John's School, Manlius, New York; College of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota; Wentworth Military Academy, Lexington, Missouri; Western Military Academy, Alton, Illinois.

One of these above mentioned has already made an effort within the past two years to arouse interest in military training among the high-school students of the central states by conducting two annual camps of military instruction for boys appointed from high schools of the Middle West. Altogether over seven hundred students have attended at nominal cost.

These young men have been held under strict military discipline during the encampments, quartered in tents, and given a course of intensive instruction covering foot movements, manual of arms, squad, company, and battalion drills, outpost and guard duty, first aid, sanitation, signaling, artillery drill, tent-pitching, trench-digging, and the like. The drill-masters have been chosen in every instance from the cadet privates of the academy.

The high-school students have taken to the work with excellent spirit, handling their guns within a short time like seasoned volunteers. In 1915 General Leonard Wood took occasion to make a trip from New York in order to inspect the work of the high-school students. He gave it his hearty approval. The experiment demonstrated the readiness with which high-school students can absorb military instruction, and also showed the ability with which boys who have received a fair amount of training can in turn serve as drill-masters.

There seems to be little question as to the excellence of the material to be found in our public schools, or of the feasibility with which it can be wrought into effective shape. While the national government has shown its approval and willingness to help substantially wherever sufficient interest has been indicated, for some time to come a large part of the work must be done by the

individual states, or even by the individual schools in the states. Washington, Boston, Salt Lake City, and Omaha have for some years boasted their high-school battalions. The work once well started and efficiently managed will rapidly gain supporters. But it must be intelligently directed and the training given must be thorough and business-like, for haphazard or half-hearted military instruction is worse than none; it is, in fact, a demoralizing influence from which many of our colleges and semi-military schools have already suffered.